

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 EB-08
LAB-04 SIL-01 MCT-01 HA-05 AID-05 CCO-00 FBOE-00
OC-06 OPR-02 USSS-00 CA-01 A-01 SCS-06 OMB-01
SY-05 TRSE-00 INT-05 SOE-02 DOE-15 DOEE-00 FAA-00
DOTE-00 ICAE-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 /120 W
-----082519 230013Z /63

O R 222323Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 138
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 4454

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIN PINT PE
SUBJ: GENERAL STRIKE: FIRST DAY MAY 22.

1. SUMMARY: FIRST DAY OF GENERAL STRIKE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
IN LIMA AREA, WITH BUSINESS ACTIVITY ESTIMATED DOWN AT LEAST
70 0/0. CENTER OF CITY CLOSED DOWN BUT QUIET; VARIOUS INCIDENTS
OF VIOLENCE REPORTED IN OUTLYING DISTRICTS AND SEVERAL MAIN
HIGHWAYS BLOCKED, WITH PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE 2-4 DEAD AND 10-13
INJURED. PROVINCIAL CITIES LARGELY SHUT DOWN BUT VIOLENCE
APPEARS TO HAVE PEAKED OUT LAST WEEK. AIRPORTS OPEN BUT
LIMA ACCESS ROADS INTERMITTENTLY BLOCKED. END SUMMARY.

2. LIMA-CALLAO. FIRST DAY OF 48-HOUR NATIONAL PROTEST STRIKE
IN THE IMA-CALLAO AREA HAS BEEN HIGHLY EFFECTIVE. OFFICIAL
SOURCES TELL US INFORMALLY THAT BUSINESS ACTIVITY IS DOWN
ABOUT 70 PERCENT. OBSERVERS CONSIDER STRIKE MORE
EFFECTIVE THAN JULY 1977 NATIONAL PROTEST AND FAR MORE
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SO THAN THE FEBRUARY STRIKE THIS YEAR. THE EMBASSY HAS INFORMAL
REPORTS OF 2-4 DEATHS FROM GUNFIRE AND 10-13 WOUNDED IN
CONFRONTATIONS WITH SECURITY FORCES. CENTRAL LIMA IS BASICALLY
CLOSED DOWN WITH VERY FEW BUSES AND TAXIS IN THE STREETS.
ALTHOUGH SOME WORKERS SHOWED UP THIS MORNING, ALL BANKS AND
THE LARGE MAJORITY OF SHOPS HAD CLOSED BY MIDDAY. VISIBLE
POLICE AND MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA WAS

SURPRISINGLY LOW, ALTHOUGH TANKS, WATER TRUCKS AND APC'S WERE STATIONED NEAR MOST UNIVERSITIES LAST NIGHT.

3. IN CONTRAST, MOST VIOLENCE AND CASUALTIES IN THE LIMA AREA TOOK PLACE IN THE OUTLYING POOR DISTRICTS AND ACCESS ROUTES. NUMEROUS INCIDENTS OF ROCK THROWING. ROADBLOCKS, AND BURNING OF CARS WERE REPORTED. SHOOTINGS APPARENTLY TOOK PLACE IN CLASHES WITH POLICE IN SLUM DISTRICTS, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO PRECISE CONFIRMATION ON LOCALITIES. A DEPARTMENT STORE WAS SACKED IN SURQUILLO AND THE POLICE RESPONDED WITH TEAR GAS AND SHOTS WERE HEARD. THE THREE MAIN ACCESS ROADS OUT OF LIMA HAVE BEEN BLOCKED DURING MUCH OF THE DAY BY STONES, TREES AND SMALL FIRES. THE MAIN ROADS TO JORGE CHAVEZ AIRPORT WERE TEMPORARILY BLOCKED, BUT OPEN AGAIN BY LATE AFTERNOON; FLIGHTS AT THE AIRPORT ITSELF WERE OPERATING MORE OR LESS ON SCHEDULE.

4. OUTSIDE OF LIMA: MOST TOWNS IN THE PROVINCES ARE PRACTICALLY PARALYZED BUT (WITH ONE EXCEPTION) THERE ARE NO RPT NO NEW REPORTS OF VIOLENCE. THE NEW PROBLEM OCCURRED IN THE MINING TOWN OF HUANCABELICA SOUTH OF LIMA WHERE MINERS WITH ACCESS TO DYNAMITE REPORTEDLY HAVE TRIED TO BLOW UP AN ELECTRICAL TRANSMITTING STATION AND OTHER PUBLIC INSTALLATIONS. THE ARMY IS FLYING TROOP SUPPORT IN TO HELP POLICE THERE. OVER THE WEEKEND, SABATEURS REMOVED RAILS FROM THE CENTRAL RAILROAD LINE (ABOUT 157 KILOMETERS FRM LIMA). AN ORE TRAIN
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WAS DERAILED BUT NO CASUALTIES WERE REPORTED. ICA, CHIMBOTE, HUANCAYO AND AREQUIPA REPORT LITTLE OR NOT TRAFFIC AND BUSINESSES STILL CLOSED BUT OUR CONTACTS REPORTED NOW NEW CASES OF INJURIES OR PROPERTY DAMAGE. ONE OBSERVER IN AREQUIPA THINKS PROTEST PEAKED THERE LAST WEDNESDAY, ALTHOUGH HOUSEWIVES CONTINUED OCCASIONAL "PAN-BEATING" PROTESTS IN THAT SOUTHERN CITY. A FAIRLY UPBEAT REPORT WAS RECEIVED FROM CUZCO CLAIMING THAT TAXIS AND BUSES WERE RUNNING, SHOPS WERE OPEN, AND THE TOURIST TRAIN TO MACHU PICCHU RUNNING WITH MILITARY OPERATORS. PIURA WAS ALSO REPORTEDLY CALM THIS MORNING AND BUSINESS MORE OR LESS NORMAL.

5. IN THE MINING SECTOR, SOUTHERN PERU COPPER CORPORATION (SPCC) REPORTED NORMAL OPERATIONS IN TOQUEPALA AND CUAJONE MINES AS WELL AS AT ILO SMELTER. HOWEVER, CENTROMIN, LA OROYA MINE, MOROCOCHA AND THE HIERRO PERU COMPLEX ARE CLOSED MAY 22 AND PROBABLY WILL BE SHUT DOWN TOMORROW. SPCC OFFICIAL THINKS THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF A SYMPATHY STRIKE IN ILO OR TOQUEPALA MAY 23.

6. FLYERS PUT OUT BY COMMUNIST STRIKERS CONTINUE CALLS FOR ANNULING AUSTERITY MEASURES, RAISING SALARIES AND REHIRING

FIRED WORKERS. STRIKERS NOW ARE ADDING THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL-LABOR LEADERS PICKED UP DURING THE PAST 3 DAYS TO THEIR INITIAL DEMANDS. THEIR HANDBILLS CLAIM THAT 20 PERUVIANS HAVE BEEN KILLED DURING LAST WEEK AND THAT 300 LEFTIST POLITICAL AND LABOR LEADERS HAVE BEEN DETAINED AS OF MAY 19, INCLUDING CGTP SECY GEN CASTILLO, CAJAHUARINGA OF MINE WORKERSN BANK WORKER LEADER ZUNIGA, LABOR LAWYERS (AND CONSTITUTENT ASSEMBLY CANDIDATES) GENARO LEDESMA AND RICARDO DIAZ CHAVEZ, POLITICAL CANDIDATES AND WRTIERS RICARDO LETTS, HUGO BLANCO, VLADIMIRO GUERVARA, HUMBERTO DELMONTE, JAVIER DIEZ CONSECO AND CESAR LEVANO.

7. EMBASSY'S INFORMAL AND OFFICIAL CONTACTS SUGGEST THAT ABOUT 20 POLITICAL/LABOR LEADERS AND JORNALISTS HAVE BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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DETAINED IN THE LIMA-CALLAO AREA. THEY CONFIRM DETENTION OF PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE STRIKE STATEMENT AS WELL AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE RIGHT WING WEEKLY "EL TIEMPO," ALFONSO BAELLA TUESTA. WE DO NOT HAVE REALIABLE ESTIMATES ON PEOPLE DETAINED OUTSIDE THE LIMA AREA.

8. COMMENT: WE ANTICIPATE THE SECOND DAY OF THE STRIKE WILL BE AT LEAST AS EFFECTIVE AS FIRST DAY.
SHLAUDEMAM

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